



September, 2013
Issue 2: Volume 5

Welcome to the Montana Primary Care Office (MT-PCO) News

Montana Retention Project Update

Montana's ARRA-funded National Health Service Corps (NHSC) providers were surveyed to receive feedback on the most beneficial way to expend the funding and to encourage retention of clinicians. The goal was to reach a minimum of 100 NHSC providers and we received responses from 119. The majority of the responses were in favor of educational webinars and stipends to attend CME courses, as continuing education budgets had been cut or drastically reduced due to the economy.



On the road to Helena after the MHA Conference 2013.

Based on these results, fifty-three clinicians were provided stipends to attend continuing education opportunities. The assistance was greatly appreciated and below are a few grateful quotes from some CME attendees:

- Thanks a ton for approving such a great opportunity. I'm excited to take what I've learned and apply it to my practice. If funding opportunities like this come available in the future please let me know.
- I would really like to thank NHSC for the funding for this opportunity to learn more at this recent CME conference. It was a very worthwhile event!
- This will provide direct and immediate benefit to those I'm able to work with, most notably the elderly denture wearers that I care for.
- THANK YOU!!!!!! It was a wonderful opportunity! I really appreciated this assistance with obtaining my CEs!
- I would like to thank you for awarding the money necessary to attend the clinical supervision training. I am hoping I can take some of the knowledge I gained to benefit the NHSC. Even though, I have one more year of obligation, I always like to give back and I am hoping I can use the information from these trainings to continue to serve the NHSC into the future.

These are just a sample of the sincere thank you 's provided, but it is obvious the impact of the educational assistance was great.

National Primary Care Week

National Primary Care Week, was recognized from October 7 – 11, 2013. This year it highlighted the importance of primary care and the work of health care professionals and interdisciplinary health care teams to provide primary care, particularly to underserved populations. This year the theme was, “Step Up to Primary Care” there was special emphasis on the need to decrease disparities in health care access and outcomes, pertaining to race, gender, and socio-economic status.

Primary care providers often are the first medical contact for persons with undiagnosed health issues, and they provide continuing, comprehensive, and coordinated care to their patients. More primary care providers are needed but the supply of these providers may not meet the demand. A variety of studies have documented a relationship between primary care and improved health outcomes, increased quality of care and reduced health care costs.

Recruitment Assistance:

Recruitment Assistance in Montana.

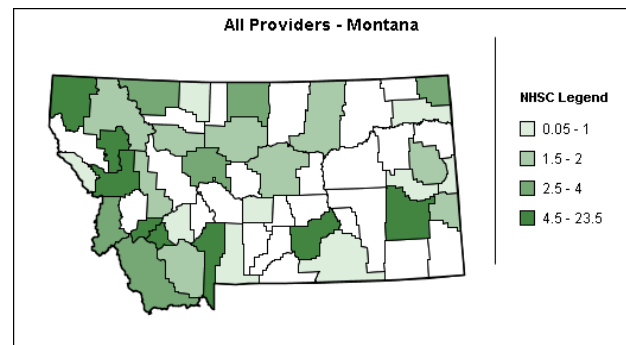
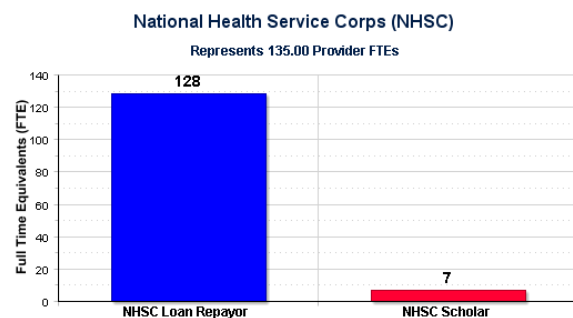
There are a number of recruitment opportunities in Montana. Job seekers can search for positions by visiting the 3RNet.org website or by searching Montana NHSC Job Vacancies at: nhscjobs.hrsa.gov In addition to the free job search sites, there are multiple Montana and National loan repayment programs available for primary care providers.

The largest program is the National Health Service Corps (NHSC), a federal program with the goal to improve access to health care for persons living in communities with a shortage of primary care providers. Currently, the following health care professionals can apply for loan repayment assistance: primary care doctors, dentists, dental hygienists, nurse practitioners, physician assistants, psychiatrists,

psychologists, and other mental and behavioral health specialists. For more information about the NHSC visit the NHSC Website at: nhsc.hrsa.gov The Montana State Loan Repayment Program is a Montana program funded with both federal and state funds. Information about this program can be found at: <http://www.scmtahec.org/loan-repayment-and-scholarships/> Physicians practicing in Montana can also utilize the Montana Rural Physician Incentive Program. (MRPIP). More information can be found at: <http://mus.edu/Prepare/Pay/Loans/MRPIP.asp>

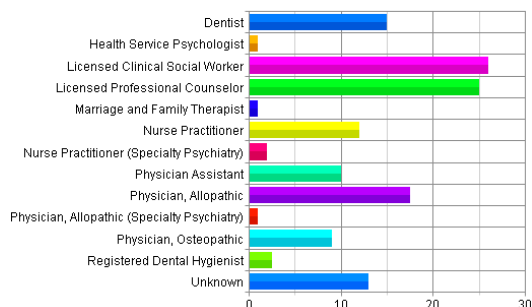
Current NHSC Statistics for Montana

As of October, 23, 2013 Montana had 366 approved NHSC sites across the state with 135 loan repayers and scholars working in Montana.



NHSC By Discipline in Montana October, 2013

National Health Service Corps (NHSC) by Discipline



NHSC Students to Service (S2S) Loan Repayment Program.

2014 Application's due by November 14, 2013. Pay down your student loans during residency; serve a community in need when you finish your post graduate years.

The National Health Service Corps (NHSC) Students to Service Loan Repayment Program (S2S LRP) provides loan repayment assistance to medical students (MD and DO) in their last year of school, in return for a commitment to provide primary health care services in eligible Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSAs) of greatest need.

The FY 2014 Students to Service Loan Repayment Program is now open. Please review the 2014 [Application and Program Guidance](#) for key information prior to submitting your application.

Shortage Designations

Health Professional Shortage Areas All 56 counties in Montana have one or more federally designated Primary Care Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSAs) in primary care area or facility. Eligibility for resources from at least 37 federal programs is dependent on shortage designations, including the Centers for

Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) 10% bonus payments. These payments are very important to rural and frontier health care sites in Montana.

In Montana, 25% of active physicians are age 60 or older and report they are likely to retire within 5 years. Nine counties are without any physician, 12 counties are without primary care physician, and seven counties are without a hospital. An estimated 27,331 Montana residents live in counties without primary care physicians. In recent years there have been at least 19 openings for primary care physicians annually in Montana.

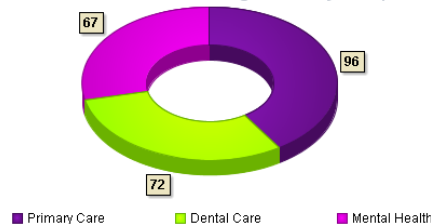
The primary care physician workforce is not evenly distributed throughout the state; in 33 of 56 counties the physician to population ratio is less than the US average.

This is significant for two reasons: (1) the primary care physicians, if any, in those counties are responsible for larger patient population than their peers nationally; and, (2) approximately 276,000 Montanans or 29% of the Montana population live in these counties. For these Montanans, access to primary care is more limited than for most Montanans and most persons elsewhere in the U.S.

The PCO completed the 2010 HPSA update designations and will have the 2011 cases completed by September 30, 2014.

Current Number of Shortage Designations in MT October, 2013

Health Professional Shortage Areas by Discipline



Montana J-1 Visa Waiver Guidelines Update of Status

Montana has 29 of the 30 J-1 slots available for qualified applicants through September 30, 2014. J-1 slots are for eligible foreign medical school graduates.

Montana PCO

This newsletter is intended to communicate information to CHCs, RHCs, NHSC sites and other partners regarding shortage designation activities, NHSC, and J-1 activities and other matters of interest to partners. We welcome your input and recommendations regarding content.

PCO Contact Information

As always, if you need additional information about the NHSC, shortage designations, or how to apply for a J-1 slot, contact the Primary Care Office staff at the address or telephone numbers listed below:



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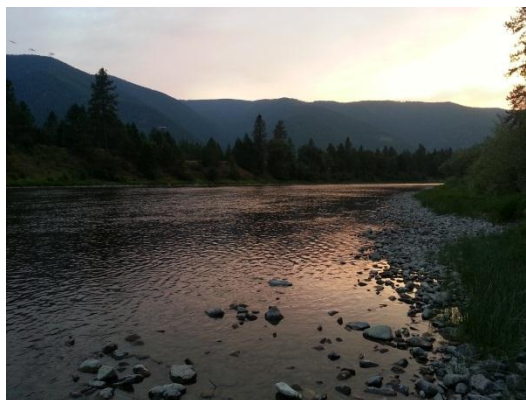


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St. Regis, MT. - August 2013

